I. AMENDMENT

A. In the Claims

Please amend the claims, and cancel claims 134-147, and 150-151 as follows:

Claims 1 - 15 (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Presented) A method of conducting an instant messaging session between a first user and a second user over the Internet, the method comprising:

associating said first and second users with a first realm and a second realm respectively, each said realm being accessible via the Internet using a protocol characteristic to said realm, each said user getting access to the Internet via one of a respective first and second device, at least one of said first and second devices having a storage media storing the protocol characteristic of the other realm;

establishing a connection between said first and second users using a current IP address and said protocol characteristic of said second user as part of an instant messaging session; and

encrypting an instant message sent between the devices during the instant messaging session.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16 further including sending a message to an IM database indicating the corresponding user is online.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 ~~wherein said step of~~ further including determining said current IP address by ~~comprises~~ retrieving said address from an IM database.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16 further comprising sending a connection request from the first to the second device for establishing said instant message session.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 further comprising generating a response to said connection request by said second device accepting said connection request.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16 further comprising displaying a window on the screen of said first and second devices, said window indicating a list of active users.

Claims 23 - 102 (Cancelled)

103. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22 further comprising displaying said window with a message area, said message area being used to indicate messages between said users.

104. (Cancelled)

105. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein at least one of said devices is a handheld computer.

106. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein at least one of said devices is a palmtop computer.

107. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein at least one of said devices is a WebTV device.

108. (Previously Presented) A method of conducting an instant messaging session, the method comprising:

establishing an instant messaging session over an Internet Protocol network between a first user device and a second user device, each of the user devices correspond to a user name, each of the user names correspond to a different realm, each of the user devices having an Internet Protocol address in the realm corresponding to the user name; and

encrypting communications sent between the devices in the instant messaging session.

109. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 108, wherein at least one of the devices is a handheld computer.

110. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 108, wherein at least one of the devices is a palmtop computer.

111. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 108, wherein at least one of the devices is a WebTV device.

112. (Previously Presented) A method of conducting an instant messaging session between a first user device and a second user device over the Internet, the method comprising the steps of:

retrieving an instant messaging protocol suitable for communications with the second user from a database accessible to the first user;

establishing a connection from the first user device to the second user device with the suitable instant messaging protocol as part of the instant messaging session; and

encrypting an instant message communication between a the first user device and the second user device during the instant messaging session.

113. (Previously Presented) A method of conducting an instant messaging session between a first user device and a second user device over the Internet, the method comprising the steps of:

retrieving one of a plurality of instant messaging protocols that is suitable for communications with the second user device from a database accessible to the first user device;

establishing a connection between the first user device and the second user device with the retrieved suitable instant messaging protocol;

encrypting an instant message communication between a the first user device and the second user device during an instant message session using the suitable instant messaging protocol; and

displaying an instant message from the first user device to the second user device using the suitable instant messaging protocol.

114. (Previously Presented) An instant message communications apparatus comprising:

a first user device connected to an Internet Protocol network, the first user device associated with a first Internet Protocol address, a first user name, and a first realm;

a second user device connected to the Internet Protocol network, the second user device associated with a second Internet Protocol address, a second user name, and a second realm;

a database storing realm protocols connected to at least one of the first user device and the second user device;

the first user device connected to the second user device with a suitable instant messaging protocol communicates an encrypted instant message between the first user device in the first realm and second user device in the second realm over the connection; and

a display screen of each of the first and second user devices displays the instant message.

115. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 114, further comprising a server connected to at least one of the first user device and second user device.

116. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 114, wherein at least one of the devices is a palmtop computer, a handheld computer, or a laptop computer.

117. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 114, wherein at least one of the devices is a WebTV device.

118. (Previously Presented) A method for communicating an instant message, the method including:

transmitting an instant message from a first user device connected to an Internet Protocol network, the first user device associated with a first Internet Protocol address, a first user name, and a first realm;

receiving the instant message at a second user device connected to the Internet Protocol network, the second user device associated with a second Internet Protocol address, a second user name, and a second realm; and

encrypting the instant message communications between a the first user device and the second user device

119. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 118, wherein at least one of the devices is a handheld computer.

120. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 118, wherein at least one of the devices is a palmtop computer.

121. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 118, wherein at least one of the devices is a WebTV device.

122. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 114, wherein the first user device associated with the first realm is connected to the second user device associated with the second realm wherein the first realm includes a first protocol characteristic, the second realm includes a second protocol characteristic, and wherein the first protocol characteristic is different form the second protocol characteristic.

123. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 114, further comprises an IM database that receives a message indicating the corresponding connected user device is online.

124. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 114, further comprising a window on the display screen of the first and second user device, the window indicating a list of active connected user devices.

125. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 108, wherein the realms comprise Internet service providers.

126. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 114, wherein the realms comprise Internet service providers.

127. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 118, wherein the realms comprise Internet service providers.

128. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein said connection between said first user device and said second user device is peer-to-peer.

129. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 108, wherein the communication between the first and second user device is peer-to-peer.

130. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 112, wherein the communication between the first and second user is peer-to-peer.

131. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 113, wherein the communication between the first and second user is peer-to-peer.

132. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 114, wherein the first and second user devices are peer-to-peer connected.

133. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 118, wherein the wherein the communication between the first and second user is peer-to-peer.

Claims 134 -147 (Cancelled)

148. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 112, wherein said establishing a connection includes establishing a connection with an Internet service provider that provides Internet telephone service.

149. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein said realms comprise Internet service providers.

150. (Cancelled)

151. (Cancelled)